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A
RECAPITULATION
OF THE
CONTEMPLATIONS
ON THE
DIVINE INSPIRATION
AND
AUTHORITY
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The FOURTH EDITION.

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OF NORTHAMPTON.

A R G U M E N T.

Introduction. The importance of the question, Whether the Scriptures be of God or no? 9. The need of a Revelation, 11. The expectations of mankind after it, 15. Many pretences to it, 20. Others plainly absurd, defective, and false, when compared with this, 21. They, as well as all other Books, are less ancient than the Bible, 23. Yet the historical parts of it are confirmed by other writers, 25. Argument from its consistency and harmony of doctrines and facts, 27. Quotation from Dryden, 29. From the goodness of the doctrine, writers and stile, 35. Not of man, because hated by him, and contrary to his corrupt nature, 44. The dilemma, 58. Argument from God's care to preserve it, 68. His vengeance on persecutors, 76. Preserved without the sword, 84. Triumphant amidst opposition, 85. Zeal and constancy of the martyrs, 87. Increase in persecuting times, 98. Improbability of imposture in its authors, 101. Argument from Judas, 115. Moral character of Christ, 123. Argument from miracles, 131. From prophecy, especially of the Old Testament, 141. And likewise of the New, 157. (Viz.) Preservation of the Jews, 159. Destruction of the temple, 161. Rise of Pelagianism, 164. Saracens, 166. Turks, 167. The Romish usurpation, 169. Conclusion, praying for the inward witnesses of the Spirit.

HERE is a Book, some say from heaven it came,
 Which they the Scriptures or the Bible name :
 The Bible means **THE BOOK**, as if this were
 The Book of Books with which could none compare ;
 The Book of GOD, by him to mortals giv'n, 5
 To shew his will, and teach the way to heav'n :
 By him inspired, suggested every thought,
 From him to those by whom this Book was wrote ;
 Surely it much concerns mankind to know
 Whether this be the Book of GOD or no ? 10

ALL must acknowledge that in very deed,
 Men do from GOD a Revelation need ;
 But 'tis another point, and hard to say,
 If hope for such a blessing mortals may :
 Yet men have hop'd—and whence that expectation, 15
 Unless from some most early intimation ?
 Many have made pretences of the kind,
 That have been prov'd impostors to mankind,
 Yet may the false gain credit to the true,
 Who counterfeits a thing which none e'er knew ? 20
 All honest men who them with this compare,
 Defective, false, absurd, must find they are.

THAT they, as also that all Books beside,
 Are far less ancient, cannot be deny'd ;
 Yet other Books, in many instances, 25
 Join to confirm the history of this.

THIS appears true by its consistency,
 As sang the poet better far than I :

“ Whence but from heaven should men unskill'd in arts,
 “ In different ages born in different parts, 30
 “ Weave such agreeing truths, or how or why,
 “ Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie ?
 “ Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
 “ Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price.”

Doctrines

Doctrines and writers in the proof combine, 35
 The doctrines heav'nly and the men divine :
 The very stile majestic and sublime,
 No human eloquence such heights can climb ;
 Consistent all its parts, all are most pure,
 And jointly all in one grand end concur, 40
 T'exalt the great Creator, and abase
 The haughtiness of man's polluted race.
 The work of human wit it cannot be,
 Till it is prov'd that contraries agree ;
 'Tis diametrically opposite, 45
 To all wherein man fallen takes delight ;
 'Tis nought but folly to the nat'ral man,
 Which neither he doth understand nor can ;
 'Tis slighted more, yea hated and deny'd
 And scorn'd by man than any Book beside 50
 And all because it contradicts his pride.
 Its friends they persecute and stigmatize,
 And shew their hatred all that in them lies :
 All which its truth does evidently show,
 Therein it was foretold it would be so ; 55
 All which beyond a doubt convinces me,
 It cou'd no work of man's devising be.

If so it were—those men were bad or good,
 The first cou'd not have wrote it, these ne'er would ;
 The first most certainly cou'd not invent 60
 Doctrines and precepts both so excellent,
 So opposite to their own will and way,
 Themselves declaring hell's deserved prey ;
 The latter surely never cou'd declare,
 That their own lies th'Eternal's counsels were. 65

NOR angels, good or bad, this Book cou'd frame,
 As might be prov'd by reasons just the same.

GOD too must be their author, in as much,
 As of these Scriptures hath his care been such, His

His wond'rous power and unbaffled skill, 70
 From earliest ages hath preserv'd them still ;
 Tho' men and devils have no means forgot,
 These writings from the face of earth to blot ;
 Vain all their efforts, see it still remain,
 And fraud and force have been employ'd in vain. 75

HARK, infidel ! hear Epimanes* groan,
 See Dioclesian† abdicate his throne ;
 GOD's vengeance for his burning Bibles own. }
 Still to our day the heavenly Book remains, }
 To damn a sceptic race to heavier pains ; 80
 No human works, with utmost human care,
 Preserv'd for half the time uninjur'd are :
 Not man, but GOD, cou'd thus defend his word ;
 Not guarded, like the Koran, by the sword :
 Yet see it not alone survive its foes, 85
 But triumph most when men the most oppose ;
 Its vot'ries raise above the fear of fire,
 Make martyrdom their object of desire :
 Hear Lawrence cry, " Turn up, thou tyrant great,
 " See which is best, the raw or roasted meat." 90
 See thousands yield their bodies to the flames,
 And tortures that nor numbers have nor names ;
 Like zeal and courage in each sex discern'd,
 In young and old, in learned and unlearn'd.
 Say, could ought less than heaven's almighty pow'r, 95
 Support and transport in the dreadful hour ?

THIS

* *Antiochus Epiphanes*, or the Illustrious ; called by Polybius (book 26 of his history) Epimanes, or the Madman. He died in great misery, A. M. 3840, ante Chr. 164.---See bishop Newton's *Dissertations on Prophecy*, vol. ii. p. 126. Rollin's *Ant. Hist.* vol. viii. p. 422.

† *Dioclesian*. See the account of his death in Crevier's *History of the Roman Emperors*, vol. ix. x. See especially, vol. x. p. 74. He died Ann. Chr. 313, aged 68.

THIS heav'nly seed, which GOD himself has sown,
Water'd by martyr's blood, has faster grown :
The executioner to day hath been
Himself a martyr on the morrow seen. 100

AGAIN, if men GOD's hand did counterfeit,
How has it happen'd none found out the cheat ?
What, were they all deceivers ? Say, for why !
Reveal the motive to the awful lie,
When shame and prison, pain and death they saw, 105
Their sole reward wou'd, none his aid withdraw ?
Or when he found the world was all his foes,
Wou'd none repenting all the scheme disclose ?
Cou'd hellish liars write a Book so pure,
And in it's cause all sorts of ill endure ? 110
Had they the art so honest there to seem,
Their tale so artless, so divine their scheme,
And all confirm by lives which none could blot,
While they themselves one word believed not ?

DID treach'rous Judas first his LORD betray, 115
And then repenting make his life away ;
Own himself guilty, when in fact he knew
That LORD a cheat to whom ten deaths were due ?
His master's guilt had well excus'd his own,
Nor cou'd his views to Judas be unknown : 120
How loud the witness, by his silence giv'n,
Judas, in hell,* says Jesus came from heav'n.

WITH farther ref'rence to that LORD—cou'd HE
Appear so holy, from all evil free ;
'Travel thro' Jewry, 'midst both want and shame, 125
Shew in his conduct no apparent aim ;
But to promote the welfare of mankind,
Relieve the body and reclaim the mind ; While

* See an admirable DEMONSTRATION of the INSPIRATION of the GOSPEL from the life and character of Judas Iscariot, by Mr. Bonar, p. 6d.

While yet he was (as surely be he must,
If an impostor) of all liars worst? 130

By wonders far above the common course
Of nature, did these men their scheme enforce;
Was all a juggle, though ten thousand thought
They saw the dead from their dark prison brought?
Ten thousand foes confess the lame to walk, 135
The blind to have new sight, the dumb to talk;
Nor dare these foes the miracle deny,
Nor are they able to find out the lie;
Was all deception, or did pow'r divine,
In confirmation of a falsehood join? 140

SAY too, cou'd either men or devils pry
Into the depths of dark futurity?
Wou'd God the Book of his decrees unseal,
His secrets to impostors thus reveal?
We see the sentence executed on 145
Egypt, and Niniveh, and Babylon?
See the Old Testament confirm the New,
While the New proves its prophecies were true.
Did Christians then those prophecies invent,
And make them public after the event; 150
And all, as ancient prophecies impose,
Upon the Jews, their most inveterate foes?
Or was the prophecy a counterfeit?
Or was th'accomplishment a lying cheat?
Say, could the Jews be at a moment's loss, 155
How to detect a forgery so gross?

So likewise the predictions of the New,
Down to our day do known events prove true:
The Jews are kept distinct from all mankind,
No other nation so preserv'd we find; 160
Their temple wholly is destroy'd, they are
Amidst all nations scatter'd wide and far.

The

The church forewarn'd hath felt th'affaults of hell,
 And loath'd the streams in which Pelagius fell;
 That wormwood star—has seen the black'ning skies, 165
 While from the pit Arabian locusts rise:
 Has seen the Turkish chiefs by God let loose,
 With all their horsemen the Euphrates cross;
 Has seen and felt the bloody drunken whore,
 Tearing the churches limbs to suck her gore. 170
 Proofs rise on proofs, around my soul they croud,
 To reason's ear bear witness plain and loud,
 All Scripture was by Inspiration giv'n,
 Written by holy men as taught by heav'n.

O blessed Book! the gift of wond'rous love, 175
 God grant my soul thy mighty pow'r may prove;
 Teach me, THOU SPIRIT, who the prophets taught,
 And to thyself subject my ev'ry thought.
 How sinful sin, how strict thy holy law,
 The need of righteousness without a flaw; 180
 The harmonizing attributes of God,
 In saving sinners thro' IMMANUEL's blood.
 O shew me these, and to all others join
 The inward witness to thy word divine;
 By fierce temptations tho' my soul be tost, 185
 That inward witness never can be lost.
 Sceptics and devils may my soul assail,
 Their hopes are vain, nor can their arts prevail,
 Nor can I perish till God's word can fail: }
 Built on a rock my hopes unmov'd remain, 190
 'Midst falling worlds, and hell shall rage in vain.

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